

FIṬRAH AND JIHĀD IN THE THOUGHT OF SHARĪ'ATĪ AND QUTB

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Abstract:

This paper opens with the classical conception of *jihād* and *fiṭrah*. Classical *jihād* includes both the military struggle against the external enemy; and the inward struggle against the internal enemy, the lower self (*nafs*). The inward struggle is the greater struggle (*al-jihād al-akbar*) which is constant; and the external struggle, is the lesser struggle (*al-jihād al-aṣghar*) which is occasional.

This researcher presents a brief exposition of the classical conception of *fiṭrah* and *jihād* as expounded by Ibn Taymiyyah¹ (d. 1263), referring to his optimistic view of human nature as a positive view of *fiṭrah*. The first part of the paper attempts to establish the classical, positive *fiṭrah* with the concept of classical *jihād* as external struggle; but mainly as internal against the lower self (*nafs*). The second part of the paper compares the modern concept of *jihād* as mainly external struggle with the modern dualistic concept of *fiṭrah* as expounded by 'Ali Sharī'atī (d.1977) and Sayyid Qutb (d.1966).

These modern scholars viewed *jihād* as more revolutionary struggle; than struggle against the lower self (*nafs*). Their concept of historical struggle against external injustice is complemented by their concept of dialectical struggle within human nature (*fiṭrah*).

Their dualistic conception of *fiṭrah* is more clearly revealed in the thought of Sharī'atī who betrays the influence of Marx's dialectical materialism. Qutb's *fiṭrah*, however, tends to be more positive than dualistic; he acknowledges the innate goodness of primordial nature; thus, we refer to his view as neo-positive.

Although Sharī'atī tries to provide a Qur'ānic basis for his struggle which is described more in material terms, he writes more as a sociologist than an Islāmic religious scholar. His views on struggle and human nature are a radical departure from the traditional Islāmic consciousness. Qutb, however, is a modern Islāmic scholar who represents the Islāmic revivalist trends in Egypt and elsewhere. In his view of *jihād* he acknowledges the contemplative inward approach to struggle; but not as an end in itself, but a means to implement Islāmic

¹ Ibn Taymiyyah was a Hanbalite jurist who condemned innovation (*bid'ah*), and interpreted many verses pertaining to God literally. Many of the founders of the modern Islamic revivalist movements made extensive use of his works.

law on earth.

THE CLASSICAL CONCEPTION OF *FIṬRAH* AND *JIHĀD*²

There is not a new-born child who is not born in a state of *fiṭrah*. His parents then make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian, just as an animal is born intact. Do you observe any among them that are maimed (at birth).³

The above quoted *hadith* contains the term *fiṭrah*. There are three classical interpretations of *fiṭrah*: the predestinarian⁴, the neutral⁵ and the positive interpretations. We select Ibn Taymiyyah to exemplify the positive view of *fiṭrah* because he has given a clearer and more concise explanation of *fiṭrah* than other classical scholars.⁶

² For a more detailed exposition of the positive view of *fiṭrah*, cf. Yasien Mohamed, 'The Interpretations of *Fiṭrah*' in *Islamic Studies*, 34:2 (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1995), pp. 135-139.

³ I.M. Hanif, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim Bisharḥ al-Nawawī*, Book of Qadr, Vol. 16 (Cairo: al-Maṭba'at al-Miṣriyyah bi-al-Azabārī, 1930), p. 207.

⁴ This view was held by the Jabarites in the middle of the 8th century. Ibn Mubārak († 181 A.H) and 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī († 1106 A.D.) appear to be adherents of the predestinarian view which held that just as God created the world and the laws of nature, He created all the actions of man, including good and evil deeds. Jaylānī maintains that a sinner can enter paradise by God's decree. Cf. 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī, *Ghuniyāt al-Ṭalibīn*, tr. A. Khan, (Deoband: Malik Publishers 1977), pp. 149-150.

⁵ The neutral view is represented by Abu 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Barr († 362 A.D.). This view hold that a person is neither born in a state of goodness, nor in a state of evil; the person is born in a neutral state.

⁶ The classical scholars before Ibn Taymiyyah who support the classical view of *fiṭrah* include: Imām al-Nawawī († 676/1277) defined *fiṭrah* as the unconfirmed state of *Imān* before the individual consciously affirms his belief; al-Qurtubī (†671 AH) used the analogy of the physically unblemished animal to illustrate that just as animals are born intact so are humans born with a flawless capacity to accept the truth; Sahl al-Tustarī (†283/896) states that *tawḥīd* is integral to *fiṭrah* because God intended him to know Him as the One God; moreover, it accords with man's acknowledgment of his Lord before his existence on earth; that is, with his pre-existential *fiṭrah*; al-Raghib al-Iṣfahānī († 502/1108) asserts that *fiṭrah* is created out of divine nature, His *tawḥīd*, and it is man's innate natural disposition which is unchanging, and exists in birth with all human beings. See the following: Cf. G. Bowering, *The Mystical Vision in Classical Islam (The Qur'ānic Hermeneutics of the Sufi Sahl al-Tustarī)*, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), pp. 156-

CLASSICAL *FITRAH*

Linguistically, the term *fiṭrah* refers to an innate disposition at birth in all human beings, and religiously, it is associated with Islām and being born a Muslim with the natural constitution to be receptive to the religion of Islām. The fact that *fiṭrah* also refers to man's natural predisposition to turn to One God is contained in the following verse:

“Set your face to the religion (*dīn*) in sincerity (*ḥanīfan*) which is Allah's *fiṭrah* upon which he created mankind” (*fatārah-Nas*) (30:30).

Fiṭrah therefore refers to the nature of God, which is *tawḥīd* (oneness of God) upon which mankind was created, that is, to be disposed to the One God.

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, every child is born in a state of *fiṭrah* or innate goodness. A corrupt environment, however, may cause the individual to deviate from this state. Islām corresponds with human nature, and therefore, man naturally adapts to Islām that provides the ideal conditions for sustaining and satisfying man's innate nature⁷. Therefore, he loves God and Islām with the desire to practice it sincerely. The man's dominant will, therefore, is to realise Islāmic beliefs and practices. In response to Ibn 'Abd al-Barr's (d.362 AD) neutral notion of *fiṭrah*, Ibn Taymiyyah argues it is not merely a dormant potential to be realized from without, but rather the source of realization from within itself. The upright monotheist (*ḥanīf*) is already inwardly guided, but needs to consciously

157; al-Raghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Mu'jam Mufradāt Alfāz al-Qur'ān* (ed. N. Mar'ashli), (Beirut: Darul Fikr, 1972; R. Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Dharī'ah ilā Makārim al-Sharī'ah* (ed. A.Y. 'Ajami), (Cairo: Darul Wafa', 1987), pp. 226-228.

⁷ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar'u Ta'arud al 'Aql wa Naql*, Editor, Muḥammad Rashad Sa'im, (Riyadh: Jamiat al Imam Muḥammad bin Sa'ūd al Islāmiyya, 1981), Vol. VIII, p.383. See also Ibn Taymiyyah, *ibid.*, pp.444-8.

practice divine guidance⁸. The above *hadith* refers to a change which may be effected by the social environment; Ibn Taymiyyah maintains that this change is from a state of Islām to Christianity, Judaism, Magianism, etc. Through positive Islāmic socialization the individual is guided to faith and good conduct for he is innately receptive to such guidance⁹. The natural good implicit in *fiṭrah* will prevail assuming that the individual will not be corrupted by a negative social environment¹⁰. The positive interpretation of this *Ḥadīth* is supported by the Qur'ānic verse (30:30)¹¹.

CLASSICAL *JIHĀD*

The emerging Islāmic society inherited the religious political responsibilities of the *Rāshidūn* Caliphate; and therefore turned to the implementation of the *Sharī'ah* to practice the external requirements of religious life. The jurists and Qur'ānic commentators therefore concentrated more on the juridical dimension of the *Sharī'ah*; that is, with respect to *jihād* the focus would be its outward dimension of struggle. Under the law of *Siyar* (expeditions), the jurists classified *jihād* under two main categories: (1) external *jihād* against the unbelievers; (2) and *jihād* (armed struggle) against subversion (*fitnah*)¹².

The fight on behalf of the community became the occasional form of *jihād* which was *farḍ kifāyah* as only sufficient males are required to participate.

The early classical concept of *jihād* had a twofold purpose:

(1) as a weapon and duty of the *Imām* to fulfil the universal mission of Islām; and

⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar'u Ta'āruḍ*, p. 385.

⁹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar'u Ta'āruḍ*, pp. 361-362.

¹⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar'u Ta'āruḍ*, pp. 463-464.

¹¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar'u Ta'āruḍ*, p. 367. Cf. also, Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi'u al-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, (Cairo: al-Maktabu al-'Arabiyyah, 1967) p. 25.

¹² S. Schleifer, "Jihad and Traditional Islamic Consciousness" in *Islamic Quarterly* 27 (1982), pp. 173-175.

(2) to restore social order by imposing the sovereignty of the *Sharī'ah* by *jihād*.¹³

The notion of *jihād* as armed struggle was further reinforced by the *khārijī* and *shī'a* threats to the unity of the community, and consequently, *jihād* was somewhat deprived of its ethical and spiritual content.

With the extension of the *dār al-Islām* beyond Persia and the Mediterranean, the military aspect of the *ribāt* (military and religious establishment) became less functional. However, it became a centre for the supererogatory service and spiritual development under the guidance of a *Shaykh* survived along the concept of *jihād al-akbar* (the great struggle) which emphasised the inward spiritual struggle against the inner self (*nafs*). Although this is a continuous struggle, it is the first fundamental stage of the *maqāmāt* (stations) to be transcended as part of the goal of direct knowledge of God.

The inward struggle in *taṣawwuf* also brings into focus the outer practice and its relationship with the inner meaning¹⁴. Just as the jurist tends to reduce *jihād* to the outer forms; the sufi tends to reduce *jihād* to the inner forms. A balance between these two approaches is suggested by Rumi who believes that spiritual progress can only be tested by moral confrontation in the community of men, and in defence of the community of Islām¹⁵.

Jurists are more concerned with *fiṭrah* and its association with the religion of Islām as such; rather than the sufi emphasis of self-realisation through inner struggle of the lower self and getting to know one's true nature. Thus the jurists would emphasise the struggle of the defence of Islām against the

¹³ Ibid, pp. 175-176.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 191.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 193.

external enemy's invasion; and the sufis would emphasise the struggle against the invasion of the internal enemy, the *nafs* (lower self). The inner *jihād* is considered to be the greater *jihād*, for with it, the external *jihād* would be free of base motives. 'Ali knew this, so when he was about to slay the enemy who spat in his face, he put his sword away, realising that he would have slain the infidel out of anger, rather than for God's sake¹⁶. *Taṣawwuf* inspired the revival of a spiritual and ethical dimension of *jihād* (holy war), and by so doing, it helped to institutionalise *jihād* on a social plane.

Sufis and jurists have a traditional concept of *fiṭrah* as innate knowledge of *tawḥīd* and readiness for Islām as religion. The sufis tend to turn to inner struggle and contemplation to realise one's *fiṭrah*; and the jurists tend to turn to the outer struggle to defend the practice of the *Sharī'ah* as a natural way of life¹⁷. *Jihād al-akbar* is a major theme in Islāmic spirituality with its focus on the *nafs* as the greater enemy; and it is extricably tied up with the notion of the outer, lesser *jihād* (*jihād al-aṣghar*)¹⁸. Schleifer regards these two modes of struggle as complementary:

Each dimension contains within itself an aspect of the other. The *mujāhid* of the armed struggle seeks the promise of the Beatific Vision in the Hereafter by fulfilling his duties to the law (*Sharī'ah*) brought by the Prophet, the *mujāhid* of the spiritual struggle seeks knowledge of the divine presence in this life by following the way (*ṭarīqah*) of the Prophet. Both are purified through combat in the sense required by their respective dimensions, both have contemplative goals. The equilibrium suggested by this model of *jihād* conforms to the central doctrine of *tawḥīd*

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 197.

¹⁷ J. Renard, "al-Jihād al-Akbar: Notes on a theme in Islamic Spirituality", *Muslim World*, 78-3-4 (1988), pp. 225-242.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 225-242.

(oneness of God)¹⁹.

The world is divided into two; that part inhabited by muslims (*dār al-Islām*), and that part inhabited by non-Muslims (*dār al-Ḥarb*). Muslims had to bridge the dichotomy by exercising *jihād* on those who refuse to submit or pay the *jizyah*. Willis argued that *jihād* is not an instrument of violent means only; there are four ways of *jihād*.

The *jihād* was defined as an effort directed against any object of disapprobation by use of the heart, the hands, and the sword. The *jihād* of the heart was directed against the flesh, called by the sufis, the carnal soul. It was to be accomplished by fighting temptation through purification of the soul. The *jihād* of the tongue and the hands was undertaken in fulfilment of the Qur'ānic injunction to command the good and forbid the bad. *Jihād* of the sword was concerned exclusively with combating unbelievers and the enemies and faith by open warfare²⁰.

Both the modern apologists as well as the modern revivalists tend to be averse to the contemplative mode of *jihād* against the lower *nafs* and to realise the human *fiṭrah* in order to know God intuitively²¹. The modern concept of *jihād* represents a rupture from the traditional Islāmic concept of struggle by the Caliph to implement the *Sharī'ah*.

QUTB AND SHARĪ'ATĪ: THE MODERN CONCEPT OF JIHĀD

Muslims have called for socio-moral reconstruction on the basis of Qur'ān and *sunnah*, particularly since the 18th century. Westerners have inappropriately termed this phenomenon "Islāmic fundamentalism"²².

¹⁹ A. Schleifer, "Understanding Jihad: Definition and Methodology" *Islamic Quarterly*, 27, 117-131 (1983), p. 29.

²⁰ J. Willis, "Jihād fī Sabīl Allāh-its doctrinal basis in Islam and some aspects of its evolution in nineteenth century West Africa" *Journal of African History*, VIII, 3 (1967), pp. 395-415, p. 399.

²¹ A. Schleifer, "Jihad: Modern Apologists, Modern Apologetics" *Islamic Quarterly*, 28 (1984), pp. 25-46.

²² The term "fundamentalism" does not have an original Arabic equivalent as it originated within the American Protestant tradition. Cf. R.T. Antoun, *Muslim*

Shari'atī identifies it as the call for an "Islāmic state"²³, and Rahman, "an Islāmic bid to rediscover the original meaning of the Islāmic message without historic deviations."²⁴

Sayyid Quṭb is a typical example of this type of revivalism as he called for an Islāmic State with the rule of the *Shari'ah*, and for a return to the original message of Islām. Although Shari'atī shared in the orthodox revivalist aim of struggle (*jihād*) against the West and oppressive Muslim governments, he did not call for the rule of *Shari'ah*, nor a return to the pristine purity of Islām; instead, he called for a classless society of monotheism. Thus, he may be regarded as a representative of Islāmic radical socialism in Iran.

Early revivalist movements stressed socio-moral reconstruction (over against the sufi ideal of individual change), through *jihād* (physical struggle) and *ijtihād* (intellectual struggle)²⁵. The establishment of the Islāmic State, based on God's will was one of their chief concerns. The Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*), founded by Hasan al-Banna (d. 1949) in Egypt, had supporters from all over the Muslim world, particularly in Egypt, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesian and Malaysia. Thus, Sayyid Quṭb in Egypt and Abul Ala Mawdudi in Pakistan condemned

Preacher in the Modern World (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 236. Christian fundamentalism is characterised by belief in 'inerrancy in scripture', but this does not apply to Muslims who all believe in the Qur'ān as the direct, literal word of God.

²³ W.E. Shepard, "'Fundamentalism', Christian and Islamic" in *Religion*, (Academic Press Limited, 1987), pp. 356-360.

²⁴ F. Rahman, "Roots of Islamic Neo-fundamentalism" in *Change and the Muslim World*, eds. P.H. Stoddard et al, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981, pp. 23-35), p. 33.

²⁵ F. Rahman, "Revival and Reform" in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, eds. P.M. Holt et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), Vol. 2B, p. 64.

western political sovereignty which sought to implement man's will²⁶. 'Ali Shari'atī condemned western society for their *shirk* (polytheism) and Iranian society for imitating them. The ideal Muslim society is the society of *tawhīd* (monotheism); a society characterised by integration; but not the society of the 'ulamā' where everything flows from the *Shari'ah*²⁷. Unlike Quṭb who relied on traditional Islāmic sources, Shari'atī drew mainly upon foreign ideological thought²⁸. Notwithstanding his critique of marxist dialectical materialism for divesting human nature of free-will, he betrays the influence of Marxist dialectical thought in his concept of struggle.

The dualistic interpretation of *fiṭrah* is held by some modern Muslim scholars actively engaged in revolutionary action in Islāmic revivalist movements. The dynamic concept of life as a struggle against injustice and oppression, and the new socio-political realities in Muslim countries,

²⁶ R. M. Burrell, "Introduction: Islamic Fundamentalism in the Middle East-Survey of its origins and Diversity", in *Islamic Fundamentalism* (ed. R.M. Burrell), (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1989), pp.9-10. Quṭb's condemnation of the west does not imply a preference for communism. He states that because communism and capitalism emphasise materialism, they cannot provide the solutions to the needs of humanity. Quṭb seeks to maintain a balance between the rationality of the secularists and the spirituality of the sufis, cf. Y.Y. Haddad, *Contemporary Islam and the Challenge of History*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), p.90 ff.

²⁷ R.M. Burrell, *Introduction: Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 62. Although Shari'atī was an Islamic radical who shared some of the aims of the revivalist, he cannot be regarded as an Islamic revivalist as Quṭb was. Unlike Quṭb who relied on traditional Islamic sources, Shari'atī was influenced by Marxist dialectical materialism as is evident in his concept of struggle and human nature.

²⁸ Although Shari'atī relied on foreign sources it does not mean he was not influenced by religion, especially Shi'ism. The fact that dialectical conflict is more accentuated in the case of Shari'atī than Quṭb might have something to do with the Shi'ite conception of man as a feeble and wrongful disposition, dependant on the Imam's guidance for salvation. Shi'ite hermeneutics demonstrate the duality of human nature with reference to the concept of *amānah* (trust) in the Qur'ān (33:72) as referring to the esoteric mission of the imams to redeem the wicked side of man's nature (cf. H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, pp. 27-28).

provided a working foundation for a modern conception of human nature. Thus, Quṭb and Sharī'atī presented a dialectical conception of struggle within history; a struggle (*jihād*) between Islām and *jāhiliyyah* (Quṭb), or a struggle between *tawhīd* and *shirk* (Sharī'atī). Thus historical dialectics became a natural part of the dialectical conception of human nature.

Although 'Ali Sharī'atī studied history and philosophy at Mashhad and Paris, he was essentially a sociologist attempting to present a socio-political ideology based on the Islāmic world view. His ideas were popular in pre-revolutionary Iran and continue to inspire revolutionary movements throughout the Muslim world²⁹. He was influenced by the anti-colonialist writer Franz Fanon, during his studies in Paris. His published works are mainly the lectures he gave in Tehran. To him Safavid Shi'ism became a tool of the powerful to oppress the dispossessed in its emphasis on the imams as other worldly intercessors, and by encouraging people to await the hidden Imam instead of struggling to improve their own situation. The original shi'ism is the Alawi shi'ism which emphasise individual responsibility and the struggle for justice³⁰.

Sharī'atī, as a radical Islāmic socialist, attempts to understand scripture according to the demands of political ideology. The Qur'an's emphasis on human will and action distinguishes it from the secular ideologies which preach faith in a blind historical necessity in the victory of the oppressed. The overall impression is a syncretism of religion and politics, not much different from dialectical materialism except for the use of scriptural citations and *religious* idioms. It should not come as a surprise if

²⁹ A. Sharī'atī, *(On the Sociology of Islam*, trans. by H. Algar, (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1979), pp.13-27. See also A. Sharī'atī, *Man and Islam*, tr. F. Marjani, (Houston: Filinc, 1981), pp.vi-xiv.

³⁰ M. Momen, "Authority and Opposition" in "Twelver Shi'ism", in *Islamic Fundamentalism*, op. cit, pp. 62-63.

traditional scholars were critical of his views. Murtaza Mutahhari's critique of historical materialism and Muslim attempts to reconcile with it, could have been directed at his Iranian contemporary, 'Ali Shari'ati³¹.

Mutahhari is critical of Muslim attempts to justify historical materialism on the following two points:

(1) that the Qur'an propounds "a bipolarity of society on a natural basis; of national wealth or deprivation".

(2) the Qur'an addresses itself to *al-nās*; the deprived masses; as if to say that it came exclusively for them³².

Although Shari'ati was critical of historical materialism for divesting man of free will, he also perceived society in these two classes. This comes across clearly in his metaphorical interpretation of Cain and Abel.

Shari'ati politicised the notion of *tawhīd* as a world view:

My world-view consists of *tawhīd*... . It means regarding the whole of existence a single form, a single living organism, possessing will, intelligence, feeling and purpose... . I regard *shirk* in a similar fashion; it is a world view that regards the universe as a discordant assemblage full of disunity, contradiction... . The difference between my world-view and materialism or naturalism lies in this, that I regard the world as a living being, endowed with will and self-awareness, percipient and having an ideal and a purpose³³.

Shari'ati's *tawhīd* is a worldview which negates all contradictions hampering the development of man, whether these are class, social, ethnic

³¹ H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, p. 115. For Mutahhari's critique of Marxism cf. M. Mutahhari, *Social and Historical Change: An Islamic Perspective* (tr. R. Campbell), (Berkely: Mizan press, 1986). For Shari'ati's critique of Marxism cf. A. Shari'ati, *Marxism and other Western Fallacies: An Islamic Critique* (tr. R. Campbell), (Berkely: Mizan Press, 1980).

³² M. Mutahhari, *Social and Historical Change: An Islamic Perspective* (tr. R. Campbell), Mizan Press, Berkely, 1980, pp. 96-99.

³³ H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, p. 156; cf. A. Shari'ati, *On the Sociology of Islam* (tr. H. Algar), (Berkely: Mizan Press, 1979), p. 82.

or political. Sharī'atī rejected materialism, but his emphasis on the compatibility of matter and spirit, succeeded in gratifying the proponents of dialectical materialism. He has shown that Islām also preaches that "human salvation, whether material or spiritual, is but the summation of a dialectic - an inner ceaseless struggle which goes on at all levels of individual and social life until the final triumph of the principle of *tawhīd*, which unites the conflicting separating parts of human existence, brings nature and society within an integrating sketch of the universe, and restores absolute equality as the primeval state of social life"³⁴. Thus, in Hegelian fashion Sharī'atī attempts to conceive of a dialectical struggle of ceaseless movement to overcome duality and to achieve the final goal of unity or *tawhīd*. He reveals dialectical thinking in his view of contradictions within history as a struggle of various pairs of opposite forces - truth and falsehood, monotheism and polytheism, oppressed and oppressor, etc. The world as an empire and the world as a feudal system represents the ultimate thesis and antithesis of all existence. Sharī'atī states:

"The philosophy of history is based on a certain kind of historical determinism. History represents an unbroken flow of events that like man himself, is dominated by a dialectical contradiction, a constant warfare between two

³⁴ H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, p.156. The notion of dialectical thinking, although introduced by Socrates, was first formulated by G.W.F. Hegel (†1831), the German idealist philosopher, who sought to bridge the gap between nature and spirit, to reduce duality to unity, by finding more reality in a whole man. Everything must have an opposite, or contradictory, were it not so, nothing could come into existence. The essence of this system is activity and movement. God is always becoming. Man has no separate personality, being merged into God, nor is God extinct from the external world. Marx applied Hegel's dialectical method of thinking - thesis, antithesis and thesis - as an instrument of philosophical truth to his dialectical materialism. For Marx's dialectical view of human nature, cf. Erich Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966; John Plamenatz, *Karl Marx's Philosophy of Man*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1975).

hostile and contradictory elements that began with the creation of humanity... .”

Note also the following passage:

The human situation, to use the terminology of existentialism, or the primordial disposition of man (*fiṭrah*) - both terms signifying the dual and contradictory nature of man - can be deduced from the Qur'an as follows: man is a free and responsible will occupying a station intermediate between two opposing poles, God and Satan. The combination of these two opposites, the thesis and the antithesis, which exists both in man's nature and in his fate, create motion in him, a dialectic, ineluctable and evolutionary movement, and a constant struggle between two opposing poles in man's essence and in his life³⁵.

Free will and responsibility make man a dialectic reality, always in motion and struggle within history and society. Shari'atī uses the Biblical story of Cain and Abel as a metaphorical framework, depicting these two characters as two anti-thetical, opposing forces engaged in a struggle throughout history. Thus, in expounding his view of human nature, Shari'atī also develops theoretical premises for sociological processes in history³⁶.

The cause of the conflict between Cain, the farmer, and Abel, the herdsman, lie in their occupations. Abel died, but Cain is always alive in man's history. The Canian order is based on economic monopoly and the consequent slaving of the majority will continue to rule over man's history³⁷. The monotheistic world vision, which was once the original world vision of the Abdian man, thus became transformed into secondary or a contradictory world vision; reflecting a dual class society. As Adam

³⁵ A. Shari'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam*, p. 89.

³⁶ A. Shari'atī, *Man and Islam*, (Houston; FILINC, 1981), pp.97-110. See also, Shari'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam*, p.111 ff., for Shari'atī's application of the dialectic to sociology. He states that society is composed of the class of Abel (representing the ruler) and the class of Cain (representing the ruled).

³⁷ A. Shari'atī, *Man and Islam* (tr. Marjani), Houston, 1981, pp. 18-19.

(who represents intrinsic unity) was transformed into two conflicting poles of Cain and Abel; the world was divided into two forces of good and evil³⁸.

Although historical dialectics of Hegel and Marx appear to have influenced Shari'atī's view of struggle, he did not follow them blindly and attempted to integrate this dialectical notion of struggle into his world view of *tawhīd*. He was critical of Marxist historical determinism for divesting man of free will and responsibility:

Marxism, by annexing "dialectical" to "materialism" ... has arrived at a historical materialism which man has ... become a plaything of this blind process of contradiction. Consequently, it denies ... humanity of all freedom and responsibility.

Like Marx, Shari'atī recognises this element of contradiction in the human constitution, but does not deny man of freedom and responsibility, which stems directly from this contradiction. Man is defined as a being in contradiction, having the dual essence of clay and divine spirit, with a will to choose either. "His human responsibility urges him to place his earthly half at the service of his divine half ... to achieve existential clarity and purity of spirit. In this way he may transmute his existential dichotomy to *tawhīd* and assume divine characteristics"³⁹.

This was not merely an abstract world-view, but the basis for resisting historical and present day *shirk*, and to establish the eternal message of *tawhīd*. Shari'atī's historical dialectics was directed inwardly into his psychological dialectics which shaped his dualistic conception of *fitrah*.

Shari'atī's individual transformation, however, was more aimed at an intellectual awareness rather than moral purification. He makes a

³⁸ Ibid, p. 22.

³⁹ A. Shari'atī, *Marxism and other Western Fallacies*, pp. 88-89.

distinction between "speaking and acting, analyzing and applying", where talking is an intellectual exercise and working, its application⁴⁰.

Sharī'atī was more keen on the dialectical discourse as a prerequisite for social change through activist struggle; and was less inclined to embrace moral and spiritual contemplation into his conception of *jihād*.

In the positive view, man's *fiṭrah* is wholly and exclusively characterised by goodness; and this is complemented by the external sources of guidance, namely, prophethood (*nubuwwah*) and revelation (*risālah*). The proactive good innate nature of man brings him into struggle with the evil due to misguided socialization⁴¹. Quṭb and Sharī'atī, however, have a dialectical conception of struggle of good and evil (*jāhiliyyah* and *shirk* respectively) in society which shape their conception innate human nature (*fiṭrah*).

Whereas Sharī'atī's *jihād* (struggle) emerged from the unity of Adam through the struggle between the pole of Cain and Abel, Sayyid Quṭb's *jihād* emerges from an analysis of the Prophet's treatment of the believers and the hypocrites. Whereas Sharī'atī conceives of a *jihād* within the framework of a dialectical materialist concept of history, Quṭb basis his view on Qur'ānic verses, Prophetic tradition and the legacy of Islāmic scholars, especially from Ibn Qayyam's *Zad al-Mi'ad*. Because of the Qur'ānic basis of Quṭb's *jihād*, it has had a lasting impact on Islāmic movements all over the world.

⁴⁰ Indeed, his description of Ḥallāj as engaging in 'spiritual or mystical lunacy' is probably evidence of his subtle contempt for sufi contemplation as a means of struggle against social injustice. His dual view lends itself to undue emphasis on action at the expense of contemplation.

⁴¹ Struggle is therefore integral to human nature because God created man in a state of struggle (Q:90;4). However, this struggle commences within man, with the greater struggle, and is followed by the struggle against social injustice (the lesser struggle). Contemplation is an inseparable part of action; the one is meaningless without the other.

As a member of the *Ikhwān al-Muslimīn*, Quṭb was devoted to the revival of Islāmic faith and practice, moral and social reform, and resistance to despotic governments. He sought the transformation of Islām from 'a religion seeking an irrelevant, static, purely transcendental ideal' to 'an operative force actively at work on modern problems'⁴². He saw contemporary society as falling into either one of two classes: *Nizām Islāmi* (the true Islāmic order) and *Nizām Jāhilī* (the rule of ignorance); the former, represents the ideological ideal, and the latter, represents its rejection. Quṭb regarded socialism, capitalism and communism as the evil by-products of *jāhilī* thought⁴³.

According to Quṭb, for 13 years Muslims were commanded to preach the message of *tawhīd* to the *jāhiliyyah* society, but after the *hijrah*, when they were confronted by the polytheists, they were commanded to fight them until God's religion was fully established. As for the hypocrites, the muslims were requested to employ preaching and arguments. Sayyid Quṭb is very emphatic in stating that the Islāmic *jihād* is not a defensive war, but is integral to Islām; it is a complete way of life which require God's rule over man. Thus, *jihād* is intrinsic to the Islāmic movement that seeks to challenge all the elements of the *Jāhilliyah* society; including those which distort human nature.

Thus, a *mujāhid* is compelled to fight against the negative forces which impedes the transformation of society under the Law of God (*Sharī'ah*).

"The struggle is imposed upon Islām; this is a natural struggle between two systems which cannot co-exist for long... . Thus Islām has a right to remove all obstacles which are in its path so that it may address human reason

⁴² C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p.157.

⁴³ H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982), p.151.

and intuition with no interference and opposition from political systems”⁴⁴.

Islām is the only true system according to Quṭb, every other system is *jāhiliyyah* (ignorance); and there is only one law to be followed, that is the *Sharī’ah* from God; and there is only one place on earth which can be called the Home of Islām (*Dār al-Islām*) and that is where the Islāmic state is established with the *Sharī’ah* as the authority. The rest of the world is the Home of Hostility (*Dār al-Ḥarb*)⁴⁵:

This Islāmic homeland is a refuge for anyone who accepts the Islāmic *Sharī’ah* to be the Law of the State, as is the case with the dhimmis. Any place where the Islāmic *Sharī’ah* is not enforced, and where Islām is not dominant, becomes the Home of Hostility (*Dār al-Ḥarb*) for Islām, the Muslim and the dhimmi. A Muslim will remain prepared to fight against it”⁴⁶.

Quṭb states in uncompromising terms that Islām represents the command of God which cannot coexist with the system of *jāhiliyyah*, which represents the desire of man. A Muslim’s duty is therefore to remove *jāhiliyyah* from the leadership of man. “The tree of Islām has been sown and nurtured by the wisdom of God, while the tree of *jāhiliyyah* is the product of the soul of human desires”⁴⁷.

Islām conforms to human nature; and it is able to challenge *jāhiliyyah* without undergoing transformation itself. Even Muslims who practice the way of *jāhiliyyah*, cannot be regarded as Muslims; they should be returned to Islām. While in America, Quṭb unapologetically attacked “the Western *jāhiliyyah*, its shaky religious beliefs, its social and economic modes, and

⁴⁴ S. Quṭb, *Milestones* (tr. M.M. Siddique), IFSO, 1989, 93-132; 133-136. cf. S. Quṭb, *Ma’ālim Fī Ṭarīq*, Dār al-Shurūq, Beirut, 1980, especially the chapter on Jihād, pp. 62-91.

⁴⁵ Ibid, pp. 220-221.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 223.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 241, p. 247.

its immoralities⁴⁸.

In short, Qutb's *jihād* is directed against all those forces of polytheism and *jāhiliyyah* which impede the Islāmic movement from establishing the Law of God in the form of an Islāmic State. There is an uncompromising division and conflict between Truth and Falsehood; between Islām and *jāhiliyyah*; they cannot live together.

The compelling need to remove the system of *jāhiliyyah* and to establish God's rule makes *jihād* imperative. Good and evil are two dialectical elements in society; through Islāmic struggle evil can be conquered, and good, which is harmonious with human nature, will prevail.

QUTB AND SHARĪ'ATĪ: MODERN CONCEPTS OF *FITRAH*

The Neo-Positive View:

According to Qutb, man as a free being can choose between his clay nature (from earth) which tends towards *Nizām Jāhilī* (the way of ignorance) and his spiritual nature (from God) which tends towards *Nizām Islāmi* (the way of Islām). Man is exhorted to strive by means of *jihād* (struggle), towards the way of Islām, and to fight against the way of ignorance⁴⁹. Qutb's dual interpretation of *ṣiṭrah* is based on his commentary of the following verses:

Your Lord said to the angels: "I am creating man from clay when I have fashioned him and breathed of my Spirit (*ruh*) into him, kneel down and prostrate yourselves before him". (15:28-29)

By the soul and its moulding and inspiration with knowledge of wickedness and piety. Successful is the one who keeps it true, and ruined is the one who corrupts it. (91:7-10)

And We have shown him the two paths. (90:10)

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 260.

⁴⁹ S. Qutb, *Milestones*, (Durban: Taj Company, no date), p.46. cf. S. Qutb, *Ma'ālim Fī Tarīq*, (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1980), p.43.

Quṭb regards these verses as conclusive evidence for the creation of man with a dual nature, namely, the Spirit of God and the clay of the earth, from which emerge two equal tendencies in man for good and evil - that is, to follow Divine guidance or to go astray⁵⁰. In addition, man has a conscious faculty to distinguish good from evil and to act responsibly. One who uses this faculty to follow his/her innate goodness to purify himself/herself, will be successful. As for the one who uses his/her faculty to follow his/ her innate evil, will be at a loss⁵¹.

The conscious faculty can also apprehend the external sources of guidance and misguidance which complement the innate good and evil tendencies. The good is complemented by Prophethood and Divine Revelation, while the evil is complemented by temptation and misguidance; and the conscious faculty chooses between them. Man has not only been endowed by a dualistic nature and shown the 'two paths', he/she can choose between them⁵²:

And We have shown him the right path,
be he grateful or ungrateful. (76:3)

These Qur'ānic verses point to the dualistic nature of the human soul (*nafs*) which is complemented by the path of good or evil. The Qur'an makes it clear that man can choose between his two human inclinations or two paths of good and evil. Verses 90:10 and 76:3 are often cited to prove the existence of human-free will and responsibility in Islām. While Quṭb acknowledges man's responsibility, man seems to be bound by his primordial inclinations for good and evil rather than his human inclinations of good and evil which emerge after birth due to the influence of the

⁵⁰ S. Quṭb, *Fī zilāl al Qur'ān*, (Darul-Shuruq, 1979), Vol.VI, p.3917. See also, Quṭb, Vol.III, pp.1392-4; 1400.

⁵¹ S. Quṭb, *Fī zilāl*, p.3918.

⁵² S. Quṭb, *Fī zilāl*, p.3917.

environment.

Qutb's concept of *fiṭrah* is regarded as neo-positive because he has a dualistic notion of *fiṭrah* as suggested by his commentary of verses 15:28-29 and 90:10. However, this notion is tempered by a positive view of *fiṭrah* as suggested by his acknowledgement of the pre-existential *fiṭrah*; and his acceptance of a primordial good innate nature, recognising God as supreme, and inclined to submit to Him. Since his view is not wholly positive (nor completely dualistic), we refer to it as neo-positive.

Thus, like Tustari, Isfahani, Ibn Taymiyyah and other classical scholars, Qutb accepts the concept of a pre-existential *fiṭrah* as suggested by *Surah* 7, verses, 172-174, when man answered in the affirmative to the question 'Am I not your Lord?'. The verses suggest that man acknowledged his Lord in pre-existence, pointing to the positive, classical view that *tawhīd* is embedded within the *fiṭrah*; and that deviation from it emerges only after birth in the form of bad upbringing and wrong socialisation. Qutb acknowledges the idea of an inherent *tawhīd* but is it consistent with his dualistic conception of human nature?

For Qutb, the reality of *tawhīd* is not embedded in *fiṭrah* alone, but within all of existence; the human *fiṭrah* is a microcosm of the *fiṭrah* of cosmic existence. The divine Law (*nāmūs*) governs the whole of creation, including the human *fiṭrah*; all of which acknowledge the supremacy of God⁵³. Man discovers dimensions of divine law, and its dominion over the universe; not in a deterministic fashion, but according to the power endowed to it from God. The Qur'ān acknowledges the unitary nature of this divine law, and to the creation's subservience to One God. This Divine law which moves the universe through God's will, also flows through man. Thus, *fiṭrah* is firmly established within the human essence;

and there is no need of intellectual awareness of it. If it is not corrupted, passions cannot rule over it. The divine law makes a contract between *fiṭrah* and the Creator - a contract which is older than divine revelation itself⁵⁴.

The Dialectical Concept of Human Nature:

Sharī'atī applied his dialectical thinking to human nature constituting two conflicting tendencies of good and evil⁵⁵. Unlike Quṭb, he did not write commentaries on the Qur'ānic verses pertaining to *fiṭrah*⁵⁶, but like Quṭb, he uses the Qur'ānic analogy of the clay of the earth and the spirit of God. Clay, the lowliest symbol of baseness is combined, in man, with the Spirit of God, the most exalted entity. Man is thus a bidimensional creature with a dual nature, a compound of two, not only different, but opposing forces, one inclined to descend to material, sedimentary mud and the other inclined to ascend to the exalted Spirit of God. This dialectical psychology is reflective of the dialectical history of a struggle which ends in the triumph of *tawḥīd*. Moreover, this psychological model has a free will to choose between good and evil, and to make one responsible for fulfilling the role of vicegerent⁵⁷. This dual nature also implies the duality of Islām:

The duality in Islām consists of worshipping two deities which exists in the constitution of man, rather than in nature. Nature has a single deity and is under the dominance of only one God. This is why in Islām, Satan is not standing against God but against the divine half of man. And since man is a two-dimensional creature who is kneaded of mud and God, he is in need of both. His ideology, religion, life, and civilization must all be capable

⁵³ S. Quṭb, *Fī zilāl*, vol.III, p. 1394.

⁵⁴ S. Quṭb, *Fī zilāl*, p. 1395.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 29-31.

⁵⁶ H. Enayat, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-77.

⁵⁷ A. Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-77.

of satisfying both these requirements⁵⁸.

The dialectical nature of man suggests a constant struggle between two conflicting forces, and an evolution towards perfection is further confirmed by the following passage:

On account of his dualistic and contradictory nature, man, this dialectical phenomenon, is compelled to be always in motion. His own self is a stage for a battle between two forces that results in a continuous evolution toward perfection. This movement is from clay toward God... . God is infinity... . Thus the movement of man is from infinite lowliness to infinite toward infinite exaltation. And the destination is God... . Man is a choice, a struggle, a constant becoming... a migration within himself from clay to God⁵⁹.

Sharī'atī attempts a comprehensive definition of Adam, the primal man:

'man is a theomorphic being in exile, the combination of two opposites, the dialectical phenomenon composed of the opposition "God-Satan" or "spirit-clay". He is a free will, capable of fashioning his own destiny, responsible, committed; he accepts the unique trust of God, and receives the prostration of the angels, he is God's vice-regent on earth, but also rebels against Him... . He is in constant struggle within himself, striving to rise from clay to God, to ascend, so that this animal made of mud and sediment can take on the characteristics of God.'⁶⁰

The foregoing citations prove that to believe Sharī'atī had a dualistic conception of *fiṭrah* being innately inclined towards good and evil. These two opposing tendencies within human nature are complemented by class clashes representing good and evil within society.

The positive dimension of Sharī'atī's *fiṭrah* is implicit in his critique of Western atheistic humanism that associates moral virtue with social conscience (as it is shaped by the social environment). Sharī'atī argues that

⁵⁸ A. Sharī'atī, *Man and Islam*, (tr. F. Marjani), (Houston: FILINC, 1981), p. 7.

⁵⁹ A. Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam*, op. cit, pp. 92-93.

moral virtue is not socially conditioned; but it is immutable, rooted in *fiṭrah* (innate human nature)⁶¹.

It is this innate good within human nature (*fiṭrah*), which is in dialectical struggle with the innate evil. Unlike Socratic dialectics (which seek to establish contradiction in human thought only), the Marxist dialectics (which views contradiction within an historical context)⁶² recognises no constant principle, but the principle of change.

In Islām, since the divine element in humanity originates in something superior to material nature, one can speak of moral values within primordial human nature which reflects the Absolute will, and this is supported by verse 30:30. Thus, man has a two fold essence: intermediate between nature and God; and moving from dust to God according to its own volition⁶³.

The innate principles of goodness enables man to pursue virtue; but as a material being, he is influenced adversely by the negative social environment. Adam is the principle essence of the species of humanity (made both of dust and divine spirit); he is intermediate between matter and spirit, both conflicting principles within his essence. Human values which stem from the divine principle can be free from material conditions precisely because of its immutable nature. Despite the element of contradiction between good and evil, man can choose between them; if not, the struggle will rage within him perpetually⁶⁴. He has to choose

⁶⁰ Ibid, pp. 95-96.

⁶¹ A. Sharī'atī, *Marxism and other Western Fallacies* (tr. R. Campbell), Mizan Press, Berkely, 1980, p. 23.

⁶² M.D. Mahule, "Socratic Dialectic and the Historical Dialectic of Hegel and Marx" *Student Essays of Excellence* (ed. Y. Mohamed), Faculty of Arts, University of the Western Cape, Bellville, 1995, pp. 1-12.

⁶³ A. Sharī'atī, *Marxism and other Western Fallacies*, Op.Cit., p. 23.

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 87-89.

religion for his transition from clay to God; from vileness to exaltation⁶⁵.

Sharī'atī's concept of human nature, however, is essentially dualistic as it recognises the conflict of good and evil within innate human nature. Unlike Marxist concept of human nature, innate goodness cannot be changed, and remains the unchanging divine element which enables man to rise above material conditions. And herein lies Sharī'atī's positive notion of *fiṭrah*. The fact of the matter is that it is in dialectical conflict with the material, satanic nature of man. Quṭb also acknowledges this immutable principle of innate good; but he does not integrating it into his dualistic dimension of innate human nature.

CRITICAL EVALUATION

Both the positive and the dualistic views of *fiṭrah* recognize man's innate predisposition for good, but the dualistic view also recognizes man's innate predisposition for evil. One can choose between these two conflicting innate tendencies of good and evil, and attempt to overcome the innate evil which is complemented by the external forces of *jāhiliyyah* (Quṭb) and *shirk* (Sharī'atī) through a process of struggle (*jihād*) against the despotic rulership of the day. Whereas Sharī'atī, like Marx, develops his theory of struggle into a dialectic of opposing forces in a perpetual state of struggle, Quṭb deliberately steered clear of such theoretical formulations. Owing to his notion of the dialectical process of history, Sharī'atī's dualist man is irrevocably destined for the conquest of *shirk* and the triumph of *tawḥīd*. Unlike historical determinism, however, Sharī'atī emphasised the freedom of the individual to choose between good and evil. For Quṭb, man is poised between divine and satanic forces, and with the help of divine guidance he/she can struggle against *Nizām Jāhili*, and establish *Nizām Islāmī*.

⁶⁵ Sharī'atī, *Man and His Nature*, p. 11.

Quṭb and Sharī'atī stressed the struggle against external unjust authority which according to tradition is called the lesser struggle (*jihād al-aṣghar*). The struggle against the lower self (*nafs*) is called the greater struggle (*jihād al-akbar*). Quṭb (more than Sharī'atī) by no means ignores the greater struggle because of moral transformation as an important first step to social change. Nevertheless, both of them have stressed the lesser struggle as they had to face the political realities of the day.

Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the *Ikhwān*, had a comprehensive view of struggle, including both armed struggle and spiritual struggle. Coming from a Sufi background, the spiritual struggle was for him an important part of the armed struggle. Quṭb's view of the spiritual struggle takes on the dimension of a prerequisite, rather than a never ending struggle. The objective of the inward, spiritual struggle is to establish the authority of God on earth as the ultimate end. The greater *jihād* is transformed into an occasional event; and the armed struggle (or the lesser *jihād*) is continuous because of its dynamic nature. The greater *jihād* is therefore a training ground for the lesser *jihād* of activist struggle; and no room is made for contemplation as a vital spiritual goal; for, believers are in a "permanent state of revolution" for the sake of God⁶⁶.

Like Sharī'atī, man is always in a state of becoming (rather than in a state of being) and therefore it is in a world of action (rather than contemplation) that he will find his true goal. Moral and spiritual purification and the inward realisation of the human *fiṭrah*, and therefore of God, are secondary to the greater goal of an Islāmic state (Quṭb), or a classless society (Sharī'atī).

Socio-political realities, therefore, have a clear bearing on the dualistic conception of human nature. That is to say, innate human nature reflects

the objective social conditions. This view poses two problems:

- (1) if dualistic human nature complements objective reality of social good and evil, then what about the pre-existential *fiṭrah* (before human creation) and the pure *fiṭrah* (at birth), which points to the innate goodness of the human *fiṭrah*? The dualistic assumption of innate good and evil does not accord with the classical conception of a good, uncorrupted *fiṭrah*.
- (2) the dialectic nature of innate good and innate evil is complemented by external good and external evil in the social world where God (the good), is the thesis, and *Iblīs* (the evil), the antithesis. While *shirk* and *tawḥīd* may represent opposite poles of the external world, *Iblīs* can never be seen as the antithesis of God; he is part of the creation, and cannot be compared or weighed up against God. Any notion of establishing *Iblīs* as the rival of God on earth amounts to *shirk*, and Sharī'atī's conception of dialectical struggle suggests this. If man is to realise his true nature by means of Islām, and if his true nature constitutes both good and evil, then one might argue that Islām must satisfy both these elements within human nature. This is obviously not the case. And if man tends completely to the evil side of his nature, does it mean that his good side will be completely overshadowed and corrupted? Sharī'atī and Quṭb did not address this problem. It therefore remains uncertain whether either side can obscure, if not obliterate, the other.

The Qur'ān (91:7-10) refers to the soul's awareness of wickedness and piety, and to the fate of those who are true to it, and those who corrupt it. In his interpretation of this verse, Quṭb ignores the significance of the verb 'sawwa' and renders an inaccurate interpretation of 'alḥama'. *Sawwa*

⁶⁶ A. Schleifer, "Jihād...", op.cit., pp. 135-149.

means making something uniform and in balanced proportion; hence, 'sawiy' refers to an upright person⁶⁷. Verse 91:7-10 means that man's soul was created upright and well-balanced; God then endowed him/her with knowledge of good and evil. Qutb incorrectly interprets '*alhama*' as "to create a disposition or natural preparedness" for good and evil⁶⁸, rather than an innate cognition of good and evil. God swears by the soul which has knowledge (verse 91:7), and the subject through to verse 10 is consistently the metaphysical. Qutb agrees that this knowledge is 'natural', but misreads it to mean an innate predisposition for good and evil, and supports it with verse 90:10; "And We have shown him the two paths"⁶⁹. Closer examination of the verse suggests a markedly different interpretation. The two paths cannot be associated with innate dualism; but with the paths of good and evil in objective reality. The following six verses confirm that they are the steep path of virtue and the easy path of vice. And the preceding verses refer explicitly to physical, social reality, as opposed to metaphysical, psychological reality. Both Sharī'atī and Qutb refer to 15:28-29 as evidence of the creation of dualist man:

28. Behold I Thy Lord said to the angels. I am
About to create man, from sounding clay,
From mud moulded into shape;
29. When I have fashioned him
(In due proportion) and breathed
Into him of My spirit
Fall ye down in obeisance
Unto Him.

⁶⁷ *alhama* (the fourth form of the root verb *lahima*) is explained by Lane to mean directing someone or putting something into someone's mind. It is therefore clear that *alhama* refers to making someone aware of something through inspiration or suggestion (*ilhām*). See E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, (Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, 1984).

⁶⁸ Qutb, *Fī zilāl al Qur'ān*, vol. VI, p. 3917.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3917.

These verses describe the whole and complete constitution of man - physical and spiritual: matter is the one constituent of man and is derived from the 'sounding clay' while spirit is the second constituent, derived from the Spirit of God. The 'clay' part is transient and provides man with the carnal self to fulfil his/her role as *khalīfah*. The body and the carnal are at most wholesome; they were created 'neutral', from clay. Since the carnal self (*nafs*) is naturally sensitive to stimuli from the environment, it is susceptible to misguidance⁷⁰.

Their view of *fiṭrah* is a dual view of spirit and clay; of good and evil; and this inward psychological struggle between good and evil is complemented by the outer struggle between good and evil on a social and political plane. Having thus mentioned the true role and import of the carnal self (*nafs*) and the spirit (*rūh*), the manifest folly of a duality within the innate human nature becomes obvious. An innate evil tendency, bent on destroying good, conflicts with Divine Justice and Mercy. The purpose of man is to worship God and innate evil is completely at variance with this Divine Plan.

Quṭb, as we have mentioned, accepts the notion of pre-existential *fiṭrah*; and the notion of a pure native *fiṭrah*. However, because of the dualistic dimension of his *fiṭrah*, it cannot be regarded as wholly positive, but neo-positive. That is to say, Quṭb follows the positive view of *fiṭrah* shared by classical and modern scholars except for his strong tendency towards a dualistic view of *fiṭrah*.

⁷⁰ This does not mean, of course, that the *nafs* is itself naturally evil. The conscious faculty of man can control the carnal self and lead the individual to good instead of evil. *Fiṭrah* does not reside in the carnal self. Clay is strictly the material part of man's constitution. The highest form of the *nafs* is the mind and the lowest is matter, and both are bound to perish. The spirit (*rūh*) of man is immortal and will return to its origin which is God (96:8). *Fiṭrah* in its entirety is vested in man's spirit. Since God has breathed of His Spirit into the clay to generate the spirit of man, it (the spirit) must be good, because God is the source of all good.

Both Quṭb and Sharī'atī view the concept of struggle as integral to human nature and to the real, external world. Quṭb was particularly wary of imbibing terms and concepts from foreign ideologies, while Sharī'atī, however, appropriated them to make his view of human nature more scientific⁷¹. He also drew upon Qur'ānic themes which are apparently relevant to the modern disciplines of history and sociology⁷². Quṭb parted company with his contemporaries who used alien symbols to describe Islāmic ideals⁷³, but Sharī'atī used them for example, in his Biblical Cain and Abel to represent historical *shirk* and *tawhid*⁷⁴. Marxist terminology, such as masses, dialectic, proletariat, bourgeoisie, etc. are virtually the vernacular of Sharī'atī's highly innovative mind. Islām is for him the summation of a dialectic and unitary principle which restores absolute equality as the primeval state of social life and the destiny of man; being more a function of economics and class system than of a force in creation⁷⁵. Enayat observes a kind of 'Islāmic socialism' in Sharī'atī's analysis of the conflict between Cain and Abel:

the real cause of the conflict between Cain and Abel lay in their contradictory types of work, infrastructures of production, and economic systems - in one world, in their differing class status. Abel being a pastoralist, representing the age of common ownership of the means of production, and Cain being a land owner, representing the age of agriculture and the establishment of the system of private ownership⁷⁶.

⁷¹ A. Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam*, p. 42.

⁷² A. Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam*, p.43.

⁷³ H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, p.151.

⁷⁴ A. Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam*, p.72.

⁷⁵ A. Sharī'atī, *On the Sociology of Islam*, p.109; cf. H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, p. 157.

⁷⁶ H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought*, Op. Cit., p. 157.

Quṭb and Sharī'atī have defined man fundamentally in terms of the struggle against the evil forces of objective reality. This conception of struggle, it seems, had a direct bearing on their conception of innate human nature constituting a struggle between good and evil.

We have defined the conception of *fiṭrah* of two Islāmic revivalists, Sharī'atī and Quṭb, as wholly dualistic and neo-positive respectively. Their innovative views of human nature drastically departs from the classical, positive view of a good, immutable *fiṭrah*. We have attempted to show, in this article, how the modern conception of *jihād* and *fiṭrah* as expounded by Quṭb and Sharī'atī represents a rupture from the traditional classical view of *jihād* and *fiṭrah*. Furthermore, we have established the connection between the modern notion of *jihād* as revolutionary struggle and the dualistic dimensions of human nature in both Quṭb and Sharī'atī. Finally, the difference between Quṭb and Sharī'atī's dualism lies in the fact that while the latter's *fiṭrah* is clearly dialectical in nature; the contradiction between good and evil in the former's *fiṭrah* is not so explicit, which, primordially is innately good and immutable; but also innately good and evil.

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Prof. Dr. J.F.J. van Rensburg lectures in the Department of Semitic Languages at the Rand Afrikaans University

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